THE NIGHT PEOPLE
Design for Involvement with Part-Time Urban Graduate Students

SYMPOSIUM

Presented at the annual meeting at
the American College Personnel Association,
St. Louis, Missouri, March, 1970.

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Participants	E. RICHARD DUSTIN*
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UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI - ST. LOUIS

An Urban University

The University of Missouri-St. Louis is experiencing first-hand some of the dimensions of the education explosion in an urban setting. In 1963, it had an enrollment of only 650 students, while the current enrollment is about 9,600 students. Of these 9,600 students, approximately 2,500 are evening undergraduate students and 1,060 graduate students. This increase in the number of students with their urban orientation has created a rich opportunity to develop a program which will provide effective higher education and at the same time counter the depersonalizing process.

As the "education explosion" becomes increasingly a reality in the midst of urban community after urban community, the statement of Horn, King and Morisseau that:

> the increasing size and impersonality of the colleges have been matters of some concern to many educators[1]

will be an understatement, to say the least, for it will have reached monumental proportions.

Jencks and Riesman have suggested that the commuter college often develops special problems of involvement:

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[1] Horn, F. H.; King, J.; Morisseau, J. J. "Facilities and Learning: An Overview of Developments," Higher Education: Some Newer Developments. Edited by Samuel Baskin. St. Louis: McGraw Hill, 1965, p. 169.

> From the fact that students spend almost all their campus time in class. This gives adult faculty an almost completely effective veto over what students do while on campus. As soon as the students leave the campus too, unless they are so unfortunate as to have a schedule with a dead hour or two between classes. Once they leave the campus they are likely to be interacting mainly with people substantially older or younger than themselves and their classmates. A distinctive student culture is therefore unlikely to develop.[2]

UMSL: Counselor Education, Philosophy and Students

The Counselor Education program at the University of Missouri-St. Louis has no single philosophy. As part of a rapidly growing school of education which has only enjoyed autonomy for two years we are void of tradition and history. At this point in time, the "Counselor Education, Evaluation, Research and Educational Psychology" Department is seeking to be called, "Behavioral Studies and Research" Department. With either name, the department has fourteen members.

As the St. Louis campus has become free from the Columbia campus, it has still developed a program relevant to the urban setting within the constraints of "night people" for students.

In 1970 there are 1,250 graduate students. Of these, it has been estimated that 90% are employed full time. In 1969, 26 masters degrees were awarded to counseling majors. In 1968 there was 19.

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[2] Jencks, Christopher and Riesman, David. The Academic Revolution. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1969, p. 52.

Ten members in the counseling department who have advisees, advise 400 students with majors in either secondary or elementary counseling. The students attend classes which range in size from seminars of 3, practica of 10, to some courses of 60.

With the rapid growth at UMSL has gone a lack of systematic development. Change in the counseling area has tended to be random. There has been little time to institutionalize changes. Some changes have been agreed to among some faculty members, only to be lost when other professors teach courses. This summer a change in the measurement area will appear in the course bulletins that has been worked on for four years.

The faculty housed in the department of "behavioral studies and research" is diverse -- ranging from interest in computers and research to philosophical psychology. The department tends to be new or senior -- that is, assistant professors or full professors. There is very little in between. In order to "involve" faculty, we have been holding regular department meetings twice a month, plus bi-weekly informal meetings called "rump" sessions by our department chairman. With such a setting we have been trying to add to the involvement of these teachers of the "Night People."

Involvement: Counselor Education, Evaluation and Research

Several programs and activities have been established in counselor education at UMSL to encourage and provide opportunities for student involvement outside the classroom. One of these is the

Graduate Guidance Association which meets approximately once per month, consisting of students and faculty advisers. It provides a means of student-faculty contact and interaction, the sharing of problems and developments in the graduate fields of counseling and guidance.

Another area where efforts have been made to assist the part-time urban graduate student is in class and course scheduling. Currently, 95% of all the graduate courses are offered during the evening hours between 5:00 and 9:00 p.m. and an increasing number of courses offering three semester hours of credit are meeting once per week on an extended time basis, rather than two times per week.

A basic part of the Counselor Education Program at UMSL is the concept of learning by student involvement and interpersonal relations. Students are encouraged to become involved with the literature, skills and tools of counseling, faculty, peers, and real clients. The crucial purpose of the Counselor Education Program at UMSL is to produce a counselor whose knowledge and interpersonal behavior will allow him to function as a helping person. The development and implementation of this principal can best be illustrated by examining their application in the courses on Counseling Methods and the Practicum.

(A) Interpersonal Relations and Counseling Methods:

The Counseling sequence consisted of the didactic and cognitive development of counseling theories and methods. Students were

challenged to examine these various theories, methods, and models in order to develop their own personal theory and method of counseling. This personal theory which the student developed was tested and evaluated in the Practicum and intern experiences.

In addition, students participated in group experiences and role-playing. They became involved in interpersonal relations through the group process. This small-group process and interaction placed the student in a new kind of "environmental process." The student became more involved in the process of learning than could be possible in the formally structured classroom. They were challenged, stimulated each other, and confronted the professor as a part of the meaningful process of learning.

As part of this process, students chose partners with whom they were to work during the course. Various assignments were suggested and relationships were developed to the extent and capacity of the students involved. Students were encouraged to share their feelings about themselves, each other, and other concerns. As one student put it:

I think the idea of behavior objectives for myself and my "dyad" relationship is what brought about change in me. I involved myself in helping my partner. We read together, tried out ideas on each other, even became involved with each other's problems. We used try out behaviors and worked together to set goals for change in ourselves. There was no external solution or formula worked out for you. You got involved and internalized your learning. It was unique

because it applied to you as an individual, and you applied it to your situation.

This involvement with my dyad, the class, and the instructors, and the setting of behavior objectives helped me to understand myself better. I became more aware of what helping was all about. To me, it meant I was not helped until I wanted to be helped and was willing to internalize. By working together on mutual goals and being able to state goals, help became a reality, not a vague concept that I was not sure about. All this was reaction to what was happening now.

Practicum was an opportunity to integrate cognitive and affective behaviors. It served as a process of reality testing for the prospective counselor. As one student put it:

Setting behavior objectives and using a dyad was successful with me. But would it work with children? I was eager to try. Let me share with you a specific case.

I was working with a third grade boy who was referred by his classroom teacher because he did not finish his work. The mother and teacher had worked out a plan whereby each day Terry did not finish his work, the teacher would send a note home. What would you do if you were a third grade boy with a note from the teacher just about every day saying that "Terry did not finish work," or, "Terry misbehaved today." Terry did just as one might expect -- the note never reached mother.

I decided to try to get Terry to set himself a behavior goal. One day in my discussions, I asked Terry if he knew what a goal was. He responded by saying, "Yes, it is when the football team carries the ball over the goal line and makes a touch down." Then we discussed what kind of goals third grade boys could have and what he would like to change in his classroom. He wanted the notes to stop going home. I asked what he would have to do to have the notes stop. Of course, it was to finish his work each day.

Together, we set Terry the goal of finishing his work each day. This was written down; and each time the goal was reached and no note was sent home, Terry made a touch down. This was scored on our score board. There were times when Terry was tackled, and this was recorded, also. But there were many more touch downs. Terry felt successful. Here was positive proof that he could obtain a goal. There was better teacher-Terry relationships, better mother-Terry relationships.

The pay-off for me and for Terry came the day he came in and said, "I know now I can get my work done. Can we work on another goal?" Terry had learned goals must be desired, believable, and obtainable and that behavior can and does change.

(B) Student Involvement in Research:

The research sequence consisted of basic statistics and measurement courses and special classes under the catch-all titles of "seminar" and "special problems." Most students are encouraged to take the basic didactic courses early in their masters program. These

courses are designed to develop in students understanding of the basic concepts in this area and to stimulate student interest in research.

Student involvement in research at this level is a highly individualized matter. It relates to at least three basic factors: (1) the student's feelings of success and interest in the basic courses; (2) the flexibility of the masters program; and (3) faculty interest and willingness in working with small groups of students often at inconvenient times. Through efforts on the part of both students and faculty, all three conditions can be met.

One such experience was a research seminar offered in the Department of Counselor Education, Evaluation, Research and Educational Psychology. The seminar was designed to focus on two concerns: (1) academic study of the statistical procedure of Analysis of Variance and (2) field experience with a research problem. Of particular import was the opportunity for students to become involved in the research process. This experience is described by one student as follows:

Five of us elected to take this seminar. We would never have guessed what was in store for us. The faculty member responsible for "supervising" the course gave us the "know how" and encouragement to really become involved in research.

The course met officially from 9:00 - 12:00 on Saturday mornings -- however, we were often there until 4:00 or 5:00 in the afternoon.

With the coffee pot perking and the donuts handy, we spent many productive Saturdays on our project. We learned many things which can be learned only from experience. For example, we all thought it would be easy to sit down one Saturday, decide on research hypotheses and instruments for data collection. We were wrong. So many things had to be considered. We spent several meetings discussing ideas and areas of concern for possible research. The instructor had "a link" with a local public school district so we decided it would be most practical to work with them. Even with this limitation, we spent many hours "haggling" over just <u>what</u> to research.

It was decided by the class to compare self-concept and educational variables for selected student groups, and to examine the attitudes of samples of parents within these same groups.

With this resolved, we turned to information gathering techniques. At one point, several of us spent a day at the school collecting data from the cumulative records on 500 students. It was decided to construct and send out our own questionnaire to the parents. You who are cognizant of the problems associated with developing a questionnaire know that this is easier said than done. Several examples were brought in by the instructor for us to study. We came to realize that form and wording were terribly important. We couldn't just slap together a few nebulous questions and expect anything in the way of interpretable results. Not only did the questions have to be present d clearly, the results had to be in a clearly scorable form. We spent <u>weeks</u> discussing word order, mean-

ing, and relevance. We soon realized that the questionnaire that would be so <u>easy</u> to do, took over a month of <u>effort</u>.

During this same period, we were busy selecting our "invited" sample from the population of parents. In order to get a better return, each of the invited members was called, the questionnaire explained, and some assurance that it would be completed and returned. As could be expected, the "accepting" sample was somewhat smaller than the "invited" one.

One whole Saturday was devoted to addressing the labels for the envelopes containing the questionnaires and self-addressed return envelopes (to encourage returns). As we then learned (and expected), because a person is familiar with a project, agrees to help, receives a questionnaire that could be easily completed in ten minutes and return it in a self-addressed envelope is no ipso facto law that this will happen. The "data producing" sample was considerably smaller than the accepting sample.

We also had decided to administer a self-concept inventory to the students. More time was spent examining the literature and looking at already tried concept scales. We decided to use one already formalized, rather than try to start from scratch on that, too. This involved contacting the authors of the scale for their permission to use it in our research.

What an education in research methodology we were receiving!

While the questionnaires were in the mail, we had several weeks in which to formalize our data analysis techniques. We spent

these weeks discussing the total package of information we were collecting, what we should do with it, and how we should analyze it.

When the questionnaires and concept scales were returned, days were spent recording the information. This posed still another problem -- how to record it most efficiently for data analysis. Several alternative methods were examined by the group and one chosen from among them.

We had many analyses to run on the mass of data collected. Two of our members (one in particular) were especially interested in this aspect of the research process and in computer applications. With the aid and cooperation of another faculty member these members of the team developed programming skills and completed the data analysis.

This was a tremendous learning experience for them -- and for us, through them. They were writing computer programs, working with data, and often "discovering" something new to look at. We were all like children with a new toy -- trying all ways to play with it, manipulating it, working with it, seeing what it would do for us. This went on for months -- summer had come and the course was officially terminated -- but I think we spent as much time (if not more) after our official course as during it.

Even after the seminar, the project was not complete. The instructor suggested we send paper proposals to national associa-

tions for presentations. We were amazed (to say the least) and worked on a summary form. We submitted two proposals to APGA for presentation at the 1970 annual meeting. Both papers were accepted for presentation. Apparently, our months of work were really fruitful.

We decided to write up the project in manuscript form. Again, much time was spent in determining how. We each took part of the paper to work on. We wrote our sect ons, critiqued each other's work, and rewrote. What a job!

This process in graduate education is practical and educational. It is the type of experience that is difficult to appreciate without actually doing it. It is involvement in the process of learning as well as involvement in research.

Programs such as those previously discussed are designed for maximizing student involvement in the learning process in masters level programs. This has been possible, even though difficult, with the Night People. However, the results of the program have to be evaluated in terms of its on the job utility.

One of the members of the research group is employed by the Division of Evaluation and Research in the St. Louis City School District. He speaks to the mutually reinforcing nature of the University program and on the job research and evaluation.

First, about my program at the University. I am in the Counselor Education program with an emphasis on research and measurement.

Early in the game, I decided I was more interested in the numbers and theory than in the dyadic relationship, so I requested and got a special program. Instead of a practicum in counseling, I have taken a research seminar, a computer problems course and am writing a thesis.

About my job. My official title is Administrative Assistant. Under this hat, I assist the director of federal programs in preparing the annual budgets, in writing the applications, and in collecting supportive data, especially for Title I programs. I also have responsibilities as an evaluator. It is also my responsibility to try to keep abreast of developments in systems analysis and measurement in the affective domain.

I want to relate how the University program has strengthened my skills for my job; and how my job has been a very practical "internship," as it were, for my program at the University.

On the one hand -- at the university -- my statistics courses, the research seminar, the computer problems course, have all been of immense help with me on the job. Not to mention the courses in tests and measurement. These have been like the basic tools with which I work. On the other hand, my work with the Board of Education has taught me immeasurably more than can be learned in a classroom situation about the realities of evaluation of an ongoing education program.

For example, in the research seminar, I thought I had learned the pen-ultimate in statistics when we went into the intricacies of the analysis of variance. The ultimate was the analysis of co-

variance. On the job, I became aware that there are many statistical procedures. But, I soon learned that the name of the game was not how complex is the statistical model about which one can wrap his mind. Rather, I learned that the mark of the competent evaluator (or researcher) was how well the statistical model he chooses to employ fits the reality of the task at hand. Furthermore, I have become more aware of how multi-faceted reality is and how careful one must choose his variables. One cannot measure everything at once.

I learned on the job that one begins with the reality of the problem to be solved or the purpose of the program to be evaluated. The next step is to choose the variables to be measured to give information that will be helpful in decision making, at the same time planning how the data from these variables will be analyzed. It is this step that is crucial. Various statistical concepts and methods are available. But these are but models -- intricate mental constructs of interrelationships. The question is, do they fit the reality of the problem at hand? In arriving at this fit, one must avoid the Scylla of statistical overkill on the one hand, and the Charybdis of a mass of unorganized data that cannot be subjected to analysis and reduction on the other. One final lesson from the job has been that a dynamic approach is much more realistic than a static or controlled approach.

Let me give two examples of my experience with the Board of Education. In one, I was able to bring my knowledge of inferen-

tial statistics to bear on a problem and assist in the solution. In the other, I had to abandon the battery of statistics I had learned and resort tothe age old method of observation and interview.

First, the success story. The problem was how reliable were the results of a survey of all elementary teachers which reported that X% regularly watched instructional TV programs on the local educational TV station. There are many legitimate and understandable reasons why a teacher would be inclined to overstate the case of whether they watched ITV and that we make an on-site observation at the time they stated they watched. If the TV set was on at the reported time, we counted a success. If not, no success. From the percent of successes in the sample of observations, we used the standard error of a proportion to establish confidence intervals about the population of regular TV watchers; and we used a Baysian technique to establish the most probable percent who actually watch TV.

Now, the problem that a statistical model could not solve. The administration wanted to know the extent to which Security Guards are needed in the schools and how effective they are. My first impulse was to start with the most powerful statistical tool at my command so that I could come up with a firm conclusion. I thought of the analysis of variance. Here, one controls all of the variables except for one or two factors which are each

set of several different levels. The same or a proportional number of subjects must be assigned to each of the different combinations of experimental effect. Now, the obvious fault of this is that one does not have the freedom to experimentally manipulate variables in the real situation. In my problem of the security guards, this would mean randomly choosing high schools for which there would be no guards, another random sample for x number of guards, and so on. Clearly, no administrator could afford to accept the responsibility of the possible consequences of such a course of action. So here was a problem situation where the research method which controls all variables except the one under study could not be applied. Another method had to be sought which could still yield valuable information for a decision-maker.

The method settled on was a structured interview with the assistant principals in charge of the security guards. First, they were asked an open ended question. Then they were requested to reply to a set of related categories. The reliability of the information was verified in separate interviews with several of the guards and the supervisor's evaluations on record in the personnel office. While the information gained cannot be used to arrive at a generalization valid for other situations, it did yield results that will be useful to the Board of Education in the current situation.

In summary then, there have been situations where I could apply the training received at the University, while other situations have demanded that I learn new techniques or resort to old ones. My training at the University has been a necessary prerequisite for my work. I could not function effectively without the tools learned there. But in the final analysis, every new problem on the job demands the total inquiry of the researcher and scientist. Each new problem puts one on the front edge of reality in the process of change. One is faced with situations where the current body of knowledge does not provide the answer but rather gives one the opportunity to add to it in the solution of the problem one is involved in.